

§6312. Saltwater recreational fishing registry
(CONTAINS TEXT WITH VARYING EFFECTIVE DATES)

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (RP).]

B. [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (RP).]

C. "Registry" means the registry for persons engaged in saltwater recreational fishing established under subsection 2. [PL 2009, c. 559, §2 (NEW); PL 2009, c. 559, §4 (AFF).]
 [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD).]

2. Saltwater recreational fishing registry established. The commissioner shall administer and maintain a registry of persons who engage in saltwater recreational fishing in the coastal waters of the State. The registry must at a minimum contain the name, address, date of birth and telephone number for each person registered. Only an individual may register.
 [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD).]

3. Registration required. Unless the registry is suspended by rule under subsection 16, a person may not engage in saltwater recreational fishing in the coastal waters of the State or land or possess fish taken from the coastal waters of the State without registering pursuant to this section except that the following persons are exempt from this prohibition :

A. A person under 16 years of age; [PL 2009, c. 559, §2 (NEW); PL 2009, c. 559, §4 (AFF).]

B. **(TEXT EFFECTIVE UNTIL 1/01/26)** A passenger on board a vessel captained by an individual who possesses a valid recreational fishing operator's license pursuant to subsection 5; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD).]

B. **(TEXT EFFECTIVE 1/01/26)** A passenger on board a vessel captained by an individual who possesses a valid for-hire charter boat operator's license pursuant to section 6313; [PL 2025, c. 155, §1 (AMD); PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).]

C. A person renting a smelt fishing camp from an operator that possesses a valid recreational fishing operator's license pursuant to subsection 5; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD).]

D. [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (RP).]

E. [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (RP).]

F. [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (RP).]

G. A resident fishing on July 4th, Labor Day weekend or Memorial Day weekend; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD).]

H. **(TEXT EFFECTIVE UNTIL 1/01/26)** A person who has employed the guiding services of an individual who possesses a current guide license for tidewater fishing as provided by rule pursuant to section 12853 and a valid recreational fishing operator's license pursuant to subsection 5; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

H. **(TEXT EFFECTIVE 1/01/26)** A person who has employed the guiding services of an individual who possesses a current guide license for tidewater fishing as provided by rule pursuant to section 12853 and a valid for-hire charter boat operator's license pursuant to section 6313; [PL 2025, c. 155, §2 (AMD); PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).]

I. A person fishing from a dock, pier or wharf that is owned by an individual who possesses a valid recreational fishing operator's license pursuant to subsection 5; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

J. A person who holds and presents upon demand a current and valid registration or license to engage in saltwater recreational fishing by a state that has been designated as an exempted state under 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 600.1415; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

K. A person registered on the National Saltwater Angler Registry through the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

L. A member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, if the Passamaquoddy Tribe certifies to the commissioner that it will collect the registry data required under subsection 2 from tribal members who engage in saltwater recreational fishing and report the data to the commissioner; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

M. A member of the Penobscot Nation, if the Penobscot Nation certifies to the commissioner that it will collect the registry data required under subsection 2 from members of the Penobscot Nation who engage in saltwater recreational fishing and report the data to the commissioner; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

N. A member of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, if the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians certifies to the commissioner that it will collect the registry data required under subsection 2 from band members who engage in saltwater recreational fishing and report the data to the commissioner; and [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

O. A member of the Mi'kmaq Nation, if the Mi'kmaq Nation certifies to the commissioner that it will collect the registry data required under subsection 2 from nation members who engage in saltwater recreational fishing and report the data to the commissioner. [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW); PL 2023, c. 369, Pt. A, §4 (REV); PL 2023, c. 369, Pt. A, §5 (AFF).]

Registration does not authorize a person to sell fish taken pursuant to the registry.

A person who has indicated on a valid freshwater fishing license issued under Part 13 whether or not the person engaged in saltwater recreational fishing during the prior year is not required to register under this subsection. The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall provide registry data from persons exempted under this subsection regarding saltwater recreational fishing by these persons to the department at a time and manner as determined by the department.

A person who has indicated on a valid commercial fishing license issued under this Part whether or not the person engaged in saltwater recreational fishing during the prior year is not required to register under this subsection. The department shall collect data regarding saltwater recreational fishing by these persons exempted under this subsection.

[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD); PL 2023, c. 369, Pt. A, §4 (REV); PL 2023, c. 369, Pt. A, §5 (AFF); PL 2025, c. 155, §§1, 2 (AMD); PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).]

3-A. (TEXT EFFECTIVE 1/01/26) Registration required for fishing for halibut. Notwithstanding subsection 3, an individual fishing for halibut in the coastal waters of the State is required to register and obtain recreational halibut tags.

[PL 2025, c. 155, §3 (NEW); PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).]

4. Striped bass endorsement.

[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (RP).]

5. (TEXT EFFECTIVE UNTIL 1/01/26) Recreational fishing operator's license. The following persons are eligible to hold a recreational fishing operator's license issued by the commissioner:

A. A captain of a vessel licensed to carry passengers for hire for saltwater recreational fishing; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD).]

B. A person operating a business that rents smelt fishing camps for saltwater recreational smelt fishing; [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD).]

C. A person who owns a private dock, pier or wharf and makes that wharf available to customers for the purpose of recreational fishing as part of a commercial enterprise; and [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

D. An individual who possesses a current guide license for tidewater fishing as provided by rule pursuant to section 12853. [PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

A person who holds a recreational fishing operator's license shall collect data from persons who engage in saltwater recreational fishing and report the data to the commissioner as specified by the commissioner by rule.

There is no fee for a recreational fishing operator's license.
[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD).]

5. (TEXT EFFECTIVE 1/01/26) Recreational fishing operator's license. The following persons are eligible to hold a recreational fishing operator's license issued by the commissioner:

A. [PL 2025, c. 155, §4 (RP); PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).]

B. A person operating a business that rents smelt fishing camps for saltwater recreational smelt fishing; and [PL 2025, c. 155, §4 (AMD); PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).]

C. A person who owns a private dock, pier or wharf and makes that wharf available to customers for the purpose of recreational fishing as part of a commercial enterprise. [PL 2025, c. 155, §4 (AMD); PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).]

D. [PL 2025, c. 155, §4 (RP); PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).]

A person who holds a recreational fishing operator's license shall collect data from persons who engage in saltwater recreational fishing and report the data to the commissioner as specified by the commissioner by rule.

There is no fee for a recreational fishing operator's license.
[PL 2025, c. 155, §4 (AMD); PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).]

6. Agent fee.

[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (RP).]

7. Native American.

[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (RP).]

8. Penalty. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 may be adjudged.

[PL 2009, c. 559, §2 (NEW); PL 2009, c. 559, §4 (AFF).]

9. Suspension. A person on the registry is subject to the applicable suspension provisions under chapter 617.

[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD).]

10. Collaboration on outreach efforts. The commissioner shall work with fishing and hunting groups and interested parties in the commissioner's efforts to notify and educate the public about the registry.

[PL 2009, c. 559, §2 (NEW); PL 2009, c. 559, §4 (AFF).]

11. Report. The commissioner shall report registry information to the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in a form and manner as required by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[PL 2009, c. 559, §2 (NEW); PL 2009, c. 559, §4 (AFF).]

12. Rules. The commissioner may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined by Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2009, c. 559, §2 (NEW); PL 2009, c. 559, §4 (AFF).]

13. Registration expiration. A registration issued under this section is valid until December 31st of the year in which it was issued. If applicable federal requirements allow, the commissioner may by rule extend the period for which a registration is valid.

[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

14. Registry procedures. A person may register pursuant to this section through an agent appointed by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to issue licenses under section 12501, through a publicly accessible online electronic system for registration operated by the department or at the department through a department employee.

[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

15. Agent fees. A fee may not be charged for registering under this section. A person registering through an agent under section 12501 may be charged an agent fee of \$2 if the only transaction conducted by that person is registering on the registry. A person registering on a publicly accessible online electronic system for registration may be charged an agent fee of \$1. A person registering at the department with a department employee may be charged an agent fee of \$1.

[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

16. Termination of registry requirement. If the Marine Recreational Information Program administered by the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration does not receive funding to conduct surveys and perform data analysis, the department by rule shall suspend the registry. If the department suspends the registry, a person is not required to register under this section in order to engage in saltwater recreational fishing.

[PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 559, §2 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 559, §4 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 421, §2 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 369, Pt. A, §4 (REV). PL 2023, c. 369, Pt. A, §5 (AFF). PL 2025, c. 155, §§1-4 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 155, §6 (AFF).

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